

Mimulus Memo



SEPTEMBER 2014

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EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 18— Meeting: Plant ID & Native Gardening, 6 PM
- Growing Natives*, 7 PM

OCTOBER

- 16— Meeting: Plant ID & Native Gardening, 6 PM
- Natural Land Re-vegetation*, 7 PM

NOVEMBER

- 20— Meeting: Plant ID & Native Gardening, 6 PM
- Natural History of the San Juan River Basin, Four Corners*, 7 PM

DECEMBER

- No December meeting

Spring 1998 in Tehachapi: Getting Hooked on Native Plants

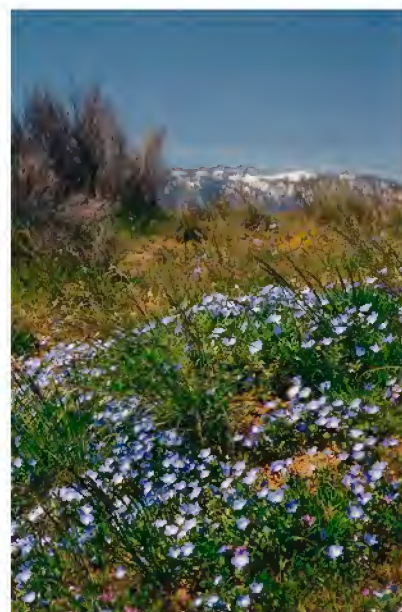
by Nancy Nies

HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS?

Each CNPS member would likely answer that question differently. For Paul and me, it was the convergence of just the right conditions — like those a wildflower requires in order to bloom — in the spring of 1998. First came a generous gift: In 1997 Ed Wulf, an acquaintance of Paul's, left Paul 22 acres of hilly, undeveloped land to the southeast of Tehachapi, along Tehachapi-Willow Springs Road. Then came abundant rains: The winter of 1997-1998 brought an El Niño storm system. And then came the flowers: Between March and June of 1998, we were treated to a spectacular, ever-changing display of wildflowers, unlike any we have seen in that place since then. We were enthralled, keeping careful photographic and written records of what we saw, and eager to learn the name of each beautiful bloom.

Leading the spring flower parade were the first baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and locoweed (*Astragalus* sp.), which appeared in mid-March. On March 21 we noted red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*) — a naturalized non-native — Mojave yellow violets (*Viola purpurea* ssp. *mojavensis*), wild parsley (*Lomatium* sp.) and red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*).

By mid-April the baby blue eyes had turned a whole hillside blue, and filaree and goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*) had added splashes of pink and yellow. Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) was blooming next to the little creek we had that year, Mojave yellow violets were more widespread, and cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*) were putting in an appearance. A week later, the cream cups had spread prolifically and bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and



Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), March 1998, Tehachapi

Photo courtesy Nancy Nies

It (*the Spring of 1998*) had been a spring to remember, and one that has yet to be repeated.

Spring 1998 (Continued)

miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*) had added themselves to the mix of blooms.



Photo courtesy Nancy Nies

Mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* sp.), June 1998, Tehachapi

At the beginning of May, we saw the first California poppy (*Escholzia californica*), as well as purple owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), and rock phacelia (*Phacelia* sp.). When we visited on May 10, clumps of bright-orange poppies dotted a hillside, and white layia (*Layia glandulosa*) was blooming. The following week our goldenbush (*Isocoma linearifolia*) were flowering. On Memorial Day weekend, we enjoyed the

lavender blooms of western thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), cream-colored morning glories (*Calystegia* sp.), light-orange fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), and, as the sun went down, evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*).

In June the poppies reached their peak. That month also brought a desert mallow full of orange blooms (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), yellow monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*) at our little spring, and, last but certainly not least, a good crop of lovely mariposa lilies (*Calochortus* sp.).

It had been a spring to remember, and one that has yet to be repeated. In our current time of severe drought, we look back wistfully to the spring of 1998 as we hope for another El Niño. Though we had previously enjoyed and appreciated Kern County's beautiful

spring wildflowers, the experience of watching the eye-popping flower show at "the ranch" that spring definitely sparked our interest in learning more about native plants. We were hooked!

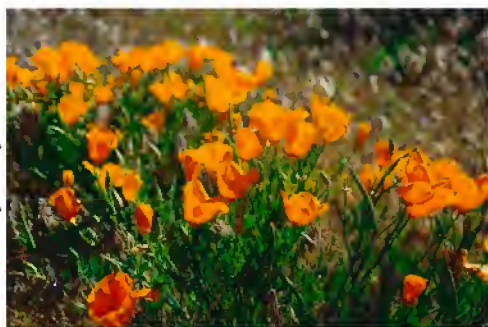


Photo courtesy Nancy Nies

California poppies (*Escholzia californica*), June 1998, Tehachapi

Thank you to:

Mike White, Conservation Science Director of the Tejon Conservancy, for leading a memorable field trip to the upper elevation portions of Tejon Ranch.

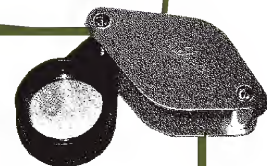
Patty and Dale Gradek for spearheading the Tejon Ranch trip.

Trevor Meadows, biologist for River Partners, for the informative lecture on re-vegetation and re-seeding.

Lucy Clark and Patty Gradek for many hours spent brain-storming, planning and arranging for field trips despite the non-cooperation of the weather systems and flora..

Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS



Thursday, September 18, 2014 - 7 PM:

Steve Kranyak: *Growing Natives in Bakersfield*

Thursday, October 16, 2014 - 7 PM:

Randi McCormick, Principal Biologist for MBI, a biological consulting firm: *Natural Land Re-vegetation*.

Thursday, November, 2014 - 7 PM:

Denis Kearns, BLM botanist: *Natural History of the San Juan River Basin Four Corners*

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St.), Bakersfield, CA.

Meeting times:

Revised format:

6 PM — **Two** informal discussion groups:
Identifying and keying plants and
Native plant gardening

7 PM — Program presentation

President's Message: Some Botanical Oddities in the Kern County Flora

by Rich Spjut, President

DOES KERN COUNTY HAVE ANY UNUSUAL or endemic shrubs or trees, other than the Paiute Cypress? The Fort Tejon woolly sunflower — which I have yet to see — is an example of a sub-shrub variety, *Eriophyllum lanatum* var. *hallii*, that differs from related species in having opposite less-divided leaves; it is found only in our county, near Fort Tejon in the Tehachapi Mountains. What I find interesting are some of the distinctive oddities that really don't fit into the species descriptions in the floras.

What I find interesting are some of the distinctive oddities that really don't fit into the species descriptions in the floras.

One example is a square-stemmed *Ephedra* (joint fir) in the Caliente region. This has the kind of characteristic one might think that a botanist would not miss in describing species of *Ephedra*, but I did not see square stems mentioned for any of the joint firs described in the *Flora of North America*. After all, botanists are trained to recognize square stems as an important character feature for the mint family (*Lamiaceae*), and also for *Scrophularia californica* (*Scrophulariaceae*).



Photo courtesy Richard Spjut

Square-stemmed joint fir. Not only is this *Ephedra* odd in having square stems, but also in having stems that hardly branch, and frequently change their direction of growth at many of the joints (nodes). — Southern end of the Paiute Mountains in the Caliente region, near Stevenson Peak, May 5, 2010.

A second example is the raised veins on the upper surface of the leaves on an oak found above Bear Valley Springs in the Tehachapi Mountains. Conspicuous veins on oak leaves are usually impressed into the upper surface, not raised above it. Thus, one might think that such an odd feature should be mentioned in species descriptions; but again I did not see that character feature in a quick review of the *Quercus* species descriptions in the *Flora of North America*.

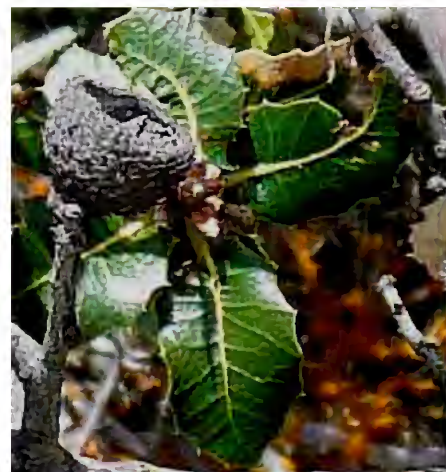


Photo by Richard Spjut with Dore Gimgoshian

Leaves and acorn cup of an oak (*Quercus*, possibly a hybrid, *Quercus wislizenii* x *john-tuckeri*, — above Bear Valley Springs, April 18, 2012. This oak has leaf varicose veins, unlike other species in the genus. Interior live oak (*Q. wislizenii*) has conspicuous veins usually flush with the upper surface, whereas the John-Tucker oak usually does not have conspicuous veins, but instead is recognized by the contorted leaves. Assuming that the two crossed, the result might be as described and shown here.

A third example is buckbrush in the *Ceanothus cuneatus* complex that occurs south of Lake Isabella in Squirrel Canyon — one that has a fruit with a blistered cup. In this genus, especially in some of the more complex species such as *C. cuneatus*, one can tolerate more exceptions, although



Photo by Richard Spjut

Young fruits of buckbrush, *Ceanothus cuneatus* complex, the whole fruit appearing as if in bubble wrap. Usually only the upper part, which comes off like a lid at maturity, is sometimes bubbly. This is another one of Kern County's strange shrubs. — Squirrel Canyon, south of Lake Isabella, May 23, 2014.

President's Message (continued)

some do occasionally get named such as varieties that are recognized near the coast: var. *fascicularis* in San Luis Obispo County, var. *dubius* in the Santa Cruz Mountains, var. *rigidus* and var. *ramulosus* in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

For those who may be wondering that if the Kern County oddities are really that different, why not just give them a name? One also needs to look at lots of herbarium specimens, not only of plants collected in Kern County, but throughout the range of the species. Our Kern County *Ceanothus* includes *C. vestitus*, originally described from plants that grow in the mountains above Tehachapi. It has been linked to another species that originally was described from plants that grow in northern mainland Mexico, *C. greggii*, one that has been interpreted to have many varieties between the two type locations, generally distinguished by leaf characters. Thus, that would require looking at many specimens and the types for many of the varietal names generally not available to me.

Native Gardening Notes: Late Summer, Early Fall

by Monica Tudor



Butterfly bush,
(*Buddleia davidii*) bloom

I LOVE THIS TIME OF YEAR. THE WEATHER IS cooling off slightly — I was just commenting that only in Bakersfield does a 95-degree day in August seem cool; at least when compared to the string of over-100 degree days we have had this year.

The hummingbirds have begun their southward migrations. The yard and California garden are thick with them. Even before seeing the numbers increase, I can tell they are on the move because the feeders

need to be filled daily. That is a labor I love! The birds don't seem to have favorites. They'll go after the feeders as eagerly as they do the flowers, although at the moment there is not an abundance of flowers blooming.



Photos courtesy Monica Tudor

Lipstick sage (*Salvia greggii*)

Autumn sage (*Salvia greggii*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), western or pacific aster (*Aster chilensis* or *occidentalis*), Texas Ranger (*Leucophyllum frutescens*), and butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) are all blooming. Yes, I know they are not all natives, but

they fit into one

or more of the garden's requirements: they are either drought-tolerant, or native, attract hummingbirds and butterflies, or act as a host plant for butterflies. The fact that they are blooming in spite of the extreme summer weather reveals how hardy they are!

Even the plant that went summer dormant is starting to show new growth. The May Night salvia was a crispy brown mess but now is starting to grow new leaves.

Every year I look forward to the bloom period of the California fuchsias in my garden. They are planted in different parts of the garden, so their appearance varies quite a bit. The plant in sand is easily three feet tall and wide. This plant gets more water than the others, yet because of the well-draining sand can tolerate it. Last year the blooms were so heavy the plant almost flopped down. What a nice problem to have! The other two are in "fighting" shape. They are more sparsely leaved and not nearly as large, since they make do with much less water. Their soil is a bit more clayey, so when they get too much summer water, their leaves will die off, a lesson learned by trial and error. I've learned the best way to get those fuchsias through the summer is to water nearby plants. Ap-



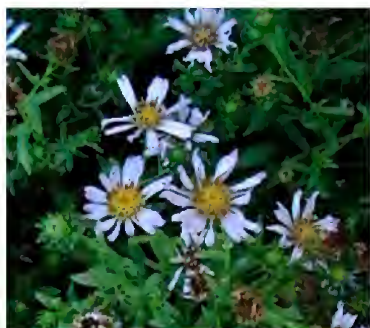
(Left) California fuchsia (*Zauschneria* aka *Epilobium canum*) in clay, watered at a distance.

(Right) California fuchsia in sand with occasional water.

parently the fuchsias find that sufficient to survive. Watering nearby plants is also how the *Penstemon margarita* BOP makes it through the summer.

I'm looking forward to the **Native Plant Sale** at CSUB, tentatively scheduled for **Saturday, October 25th**. I'm doodling plans on scrap pieces of paper, mentally selecting plants and imagining what the new part of the garden will look like after a few years. The Bakersfield sun is daunting, so one thing is for sure, there will be shade of some sort. I like the light shade cast by a Desert Museum palo verde. It is enough to provide a bit of cooling, but not too dense to prevent plants from growing under its shade. Another design element will be a fountain of some sort. The sound of water is cooling and draws birds to the garden.

Our next meeting is **Thursday September 18** at the Hall Ambulance Community Room, 1031 21st St, corner of N St. & 21st St., 6:00–9:00 PM Come at 6:00 p.m. to learn about identifying plants or to talk about native plant gardening. At 7:00 PM, **Steve Kranyak** will talk about growing native plants in Bakersfield.



California Aster
(*Aster chilensis*)



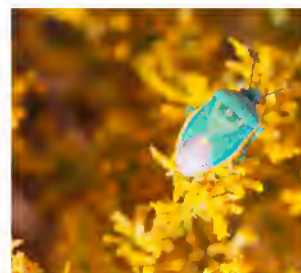
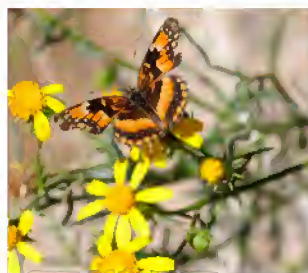
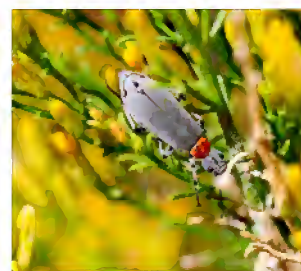
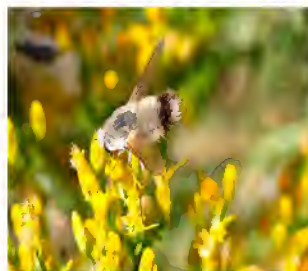
Proposed Trip to Mojave National Preserve: STAY TUNED FOR PLANS!

by Lucy Clark

IN SEPTEMBER 2012, AFTER THE MONSOON rains in the desert, Clyde and I saw many fall flowers which were magnets for amazing flies, butterflies, beetles, moths, and caterpillars.

After hearing about monsoon rains in the **Mojave National Preserve** this summer, and receiving encouraging words from **Annie Kearns** who works there, we are planning another trip to see flowers and their attendant pollinators. We will probably go during the week, due to weekend traffic, and stay in Primm, NV overnight. There are also two convenient campgrounds: Mid Hills and Hole-in-the-Wall at the Mojave National Preserve.

We are hoping for more rain out there, and await word from Annie about the bloom. A notice will go out to all, and all are welcome to experience the impact of the monsoons.



Photos courtesy Clyde Golden

Flowers and insect pollinators at Mojave National Preserve, 2012



THE XERCES SOCIETY
FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION

ADVANCING HABITAT RESTORATION FOR MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

*Xerces' Project Milkweed Offers New Plant Guide
for Conservation Professionals*

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES NEED MILKWEED. In addition to being the obligate food source for monarch caterpillars, milkweeds also provide abundant nectar for the adult butterflies, as well as bees and other beneficial insects. However, like many other native plant species, milkweeds are disappearing from the landscape in the wake of urban development and agricultural intensification. Responding to this issue, a new guide from the Xerces Society shows how to bring back our milkweeds and restore habitat for monarch butterflies. *Milkweeds: A Conservation Practitioner's Guide* is a first-of-its kind manual on large-scale milkweed seed production, nursery propagation, and field restoration of the plants. This tool will empower seed producers, native plant nurseries, conservation agencies, community groups, and NGOs with the latest and most comprehensive science-based milkweed propagation and restoration methods ever compiled in a single publication.

Since 2010, Xerces' *Project Milkweed* has worked with the native seed industry, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and community partners to increase the availability of milkweed seed for use in monarch butterfly habitat restoration efforts. These efforts have resulted in new large-scale seed production projects in several states and nearly 35 million milkweed seeds available for restoration projects! With the release of this guide, we are now pleased to share the knowledge and practical skills developed through this work.

The information in *Milkweeds: A Conservation Practitioner's Guide* is gathered from interviews with

native plant nurseries and seed producers, gained firsthand through Project Milkweed, and synthesized from scientific literature. It provides conservation professionals with information about optimizing milkweed seed production methods, offers guidance on incorporating milkweeds into restoration and revegetation efforts, and highlights milkweeds' unique characteristics and value to wildlife. Native seed producers, restoration practitioners, land managers, monarch conservationists, gardeners, and landowners will all find this guide valuable. Download a free PDF now of *Milkweeds: A Conservation Practitioner's Guide* at <http://www.xerces.org/milkweeds-a-conservation-practitioners-guide/>

Featured topics include:

- Milkweeds' value to monarch butterflies, pollinators, and other beneficial insects;
- Pollination ecology;
- Tips for collecting foundation germ plasm;
- Methods for germinating seed and producing transplants;
- Detailed guidelines for large-scale milkweed seed production, from field establishment through seed cleaning;
- In-depth profiles of milkweed specialist insects;
- Guidance on identifying and managing milkweed diseases;
- Assessment of milkweed seed availability on a regional basis;
- Opportunities to include milkweeds in monarch and pollinator habitat restoration efforts; and
- Regional recommendations of priority species for use in restoration.

To learn more about **Project Milkweed**, visit www.xerces.org/milkweed

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Mark your calendar!



CalWild
celebrates the
50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE WILDERNESS ACT

WALK FOR THE WILD:

Saturday, September 27, 2014
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
1500 N College Ave
Claremont, CA 91711

Wilderness Festival, 9 AM - 4 PM — FREE

- Fun, family friendly activities
- Food trucks
- "Leave No Trace" Traveling Trainers
- Live music
- Partner groups with info and activities
- Ways for you to get involved in wilderness protection.

Walk for the Wild

- Start times between 9 AM and noon
- Approximately 1.5 miles (two route options)
- Interactive stations along the way
- \$12 per person, register online at www.active.com
- Registration includes Garden Admission and a commemorative T-shirt.

Register for this event at www.active.com/claremont-ca/walking/races/walk-for-the-wild-a-50th-anniversa Native



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PROGRESS AND PROMISE

January 15-17, 2015
DoubleTree by Hilton
San Jose, CA,

Join over 1,000 conservation and native plant enthusiasts in San Jose! Attendees include scientists, conservationists, CNPS chapters, university professors and students, policymakers, professional and amateur botanists, landscaping professionals, and land-use planners from California and beyond.

There are lots of great reasons to be there!

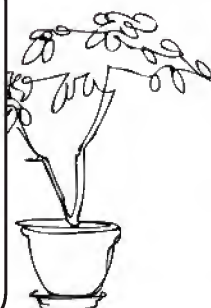
- Gain valuable skills and experience by attending a **Pre-Conference Workshop**
- Sign up for a **Field Trip** to visit local botanic hot-spots
- Learn about current conservation research and trends from over 300 presenters in 25 themed sessions, plus all-new **Lightning Talks!**
- Hear big ideas for the future from keynote and plenary speakers, including **Michael Soulé** and **Jared Farmer**
- Socialize, network, share, and connect with the largest gathering of conservationists and native plant enthusiasts in the state of California
- Participate in the **Silent Auction**
- Enjoy botanical art, poetry, photography, and music in the disco bar
- This venue is the perfect central location - explore San Jose and the Bay Area
- This exciting and inspirational event happens only once every 3 years, plus it's the 50th birthday of CNPS - so don't miss out!



Plant Sale

Oct. 25, 2014 at CSUB

For pre-orders contact Dorie Giragosian
dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com



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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society meets the third Thursday of each month at Hall Ambulance Community Room, 1013 21st St. (21st & N St), Bakersfield, CA. Chapter Website: kern.cnps.org

The California Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of California native plants and their natural habitats, and to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons – professional and amateur with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking and gardening. As a Kern County resident, your membership includes Fremontia, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; the Bulletin, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and The Mimulus Memo, the newsletter of the Kern Chapter.

Join CNPS or renew your membership online at www.cnps.org.

Student/ Limited Income – \$25

Individual – \$45

Family or Library – \$75

KERN COUNTY BOTANICAL ODDITIES
NATIVE PLANT GARDENING
MEETING PLACE, DATES & TOPICS

Inside this Issue:

Mimulus
Memo



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